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DRIVING THE FIRST STAKE  
FOR THE  
CAPITOL AT LANSING

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BY REV. F. A. BLADES.

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## DRIVING THE FIRST STAKE FOR THE CAPITOL AT LANSING.

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BY REV. F. A. BLADES.

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I have been requested to furnish your society with some pioneer reminiscences of Michigan. I have never thought that any of my particular early experiences were of sufficient consequence to call for recital, or be of more than a passing incident that might be called up in connection with something of modern times. One objection I have had and still have, that one has in reminiscences to refer so often to his own personality that it is "I," "I," until ego becomes "it" of modern times.

The incidents to which particular reference has been made, of my first visit to Lansing, occurred, I would now think, in the early part of the month of April, 1847. I think the bill for locating the capital where it now stands was passed in March, 1847. Before referring to that particular event, I would say that my father immigrated from Western New York to the State of Michigan, reaching Detroit in May, 1835. As I remember Detroit at that time, it seemed but a large village; I do not now call to mind more than one or two buildings north of Jefferson avenue; still my observation might not have been correct, as I was then but a poor, sickly boy who had been condemned to die of consumption. My father took his immigrant wagon from the boat, and with such help as he could command put it together, and with goods loaded, and horses attached, the family started for Grand Blanc, Genesee county, Michigan, leaving Detroit at about nine o'clock in the morning. The first day revealed to us the longest mud hole that I had ever seen; it reached from Detroit to a small log cabin, not far from where the log cabin now stands on Senator Palmer's farm. The inn was kept by a woman who came to be known as Mother Handsome. She was a homely woman, but she knew how to keep a hotel, and make everybody mind their own business and behave them-

selves while on her premises. Seven miles was this day's progress, and it was a hard day's work, and we were all tired out. It took two and one-half days to go from this place to Grand Blanc. What is now known as Woodward avenue extended, was then known as the "Saginaw Turnpike," and was just being put through. Part of the way it had been plowed and scraped up in the center, but it was new and wet, and it was mud, "Michigan Mud." Michigan May rains furnished the water, and the immigrants' wagons churned and mixed up the mud. This trip was always fresh in the memory of the Blades family, consisting then of William and Charlotte, his wife, F. A. Blades, the writer, and J. H. C. Blades, a lawyer of Flint, who died in early manhood, and two daughters—one deceased in Grand Rapids, the other living in Chicago. On reaching Grand Blanc we found an old Indian trading house had been reserved for us by a friend of my father, Mr. C. D. W. Gibbson. At first this was thought to be almost a Godsend, as we did not know but that we would have to live in the wagon, until we could build something. As I said before, it was an old Indian trading house, and the Indians had come to think they had acquired some right there, at least they made themselves so familiar that they would come and go at their own sweet will, and the result was that we were very soon invaded by a lot of wild Indians; it was very embarrassing, and my mother was terror stricken with our new friends, as they afterwards proved themselves to be. I will relate a little incident that serves to encourage humanity to try and do right. The Indians came in great numbers soon after our arrival at Grand Blanc on their way to Saginaw, I think to receive their annual payment from the government. Chief Fisher had a beautiful daughter about sixteen years old, and when they camped near our house that night they came to solicit some advice from the "white squaw," as they called my mother, and she went over and tried to persuade the chief to let the girl go home with her, and she would take good care of her. The next morning, however, she was sick, and as the Indians must go to Saginaw and get their money, my mother took the girl and cared for her with all the tenderness she could bestow upon her own child. When the chief returned she was very much improved and gave evidence of a speedy recovery, but the human sympathy of the white squaw for the Indian girl was never forgotten by that tribe. I remember something over a year after that, when Fisher and some of his brave hunters were passing, they called at the house, and every member of the family was sick with ague, some shaking with chills, others burning with the fever, and I alone carrying on the work of relief. Provisions were scarce; there was not a pound of flour in the whole settlement, which consisted of four or five families within a radius of two miles, but we all expected some parties home with some flour almost any day or hour. Fisher inquired for something to eat, and when told the condition of things, he gave an Indian grunt, and went away, but it was not very many hours

before he returned with a saddle of venison, and for some time afterwards we had a call every few days from some of the Fisher Indians to know if we wanted anything.

The fact was that the malaria that was curing my consumption was seemingly killing the rest of the family with ague and bilious fever. My health improved very fast, and it was not long before I was racing through the woods with my rifle to supply the table with food, and for a time the family depended as much on my rifle for their meat as your households now depend upon the market. The friendliness of the Indians gave me the companionship of some of the Indian boys, and some of the older men of the tribe took me along with them and taught me their art in stalking or tracking deer or bear. These Indians were the soul of honor according to their standard. If I wounded the game, and the Indians pursued it to the finish and secured it, he was as sure to bring me the skin as he got the game. My mark or bullet hole made on it gave it to me. The carcass was his. Possibly a little incident of this Indian friendship may interest you for a moment. I was married in September, 1846, to Miss Helen Brown of Grand Blanc. We had been lovers from childhood. In the fall of 1847, I was returning with my wife for a short visit to the homes of both our parents at Flint and Grand Blanc, coming out of the woods on the then unopened road a part of the way between Shiawassee county, and Flint, Genesee county, Michigan, we came into what was known as the Miller settlement. I had not seen any of my Indian friends for several years; on coming into the settlement we noticed several Indian ponies picking grass by the side of the road, but thought nothing particular about them until we were right in the midst of their owners, who were lying in the shade of the trees and fences. All of a sudden a stalwart Indian arose and gave a whoop that brought every Indian man and woman to their feet, and rushing up to the buggy where we were sitting,—my wife shivering from fright and alarm of what might come next,—the Indian grasped my hand and arm, and I was on the ground beside him. “Boo-sheu, boo-sheu, ne-con-nis?” (I do not know if this is the right spelling for these Chippewa words.) “How are you, my friends?” It was Mash-quet, I think next in line for chief when Chief Fisher was gone, and such a demonstration of friendship I never had before or since; he hugged me, and shook hands with me over and over again. Then he sent for his four wives and all his papooses, and my wife, recovering from her alarm, got out of the buggy and shook hands with Mash-quet and his whole family. Then he called all the Indian men and women about him and told them the story of the “white squaw” who cared for the sick Indian girl, and told them all if they ever had an opportunity to do me or mine a favor to do it. The interview over, wife and I got into the buggy and rode off. For a time there was nothing said, I was busy thinking of the past, then only a few years gone by, as my wife broke the silence by the remark, “If

you think you are likely to meet any more of your personal friends, I wish you would tell me a little in advance, for I would like to be prepared for such a reception." That was the last I ever saw of my Indian friends; still I cherish the memory of their friendship. I remember their gratitude for a little service rendered that puts to shame the exhibition of more pretentious civilization and religion. I have never forgotten Shakespeare's words, "Ingratitude. thou marble-hearted fiend." If the recital of these incidents shall inspire gratitude in any heart, either toward God or man, then I am more than paid for the effort.

The events of early pioneer life are ordinarily very tame; they are only interesting as they magnify themselves when compared with the circumstances of modern civilized life. I think the friendships of the early pioneers were a little warmer and stronger than at the present time. I believe that the first settlers of Michigan lived and got as much out of life as any people or any civilization in any epoch of the world's history. In making this statement I am not unmindful of the privations, the coarse and sometimes scanty fare of the early pioneers; but then their life was simple, unpretentious; their fellowship in the family and neighborhood was hearty, whole-souled, overflowing with kindness, manifesting a desire to help rather than hinder. If a neighbor fell sick and ran behind in his work, the whole neighborhood would come together, sometimes men and women, the men to do the hard work on the farm like logging and clearing the land for sowing his fall wheat or gathering his harvest; the wife or daughter came along with some knic-knacs for the table, which was set in the yard for dinner and supper, and to help along with the work, and it became a gala day, and helped in soul and body the poor, sick man. When an invitation had been extended to several families to come together for a dinner, which was quite frequent in the fall and winter time, as soon as the ladies got there they would put on aprons and turn in and help the good wife who was getting ready to entertain them. And while the dinners were not such as they serve at the present time, with a great number of courses and variety of wines, still they were hearty, toothsome and very enjoyable, and the memory of them to-day is as pleasant as the memory of more sumptuous occasions in later life. Just think of a twenty or twenty-five pound wild turkey, fat and flavored with the nuts from the woods, and a ham or a saddle of venison, both done on a spit before the fire, but in the open air, watched every minute and basted at regular intervals! The venison with large holes cut with the hunting knife, and then filled with strips of salt pork drawn into them, flanked by the vegetables of the season and "home made bread," and doughnuts cooked in fine bear's oil, and the lusty crowd, and sometimes the children's table on the side! Talk about dinners and a dinner party; why, a man that is only about fifty years old, compared with those old pioneer days, hardly knows what a square meal or a "good time" is! And the best of all is the heartiness



of the fellowship. The old pioneers do not need your pity; no, not "a little bit." I believe that the young people in early pioneer days got as much out of life as do the young people of the present time. Fifteen or twenty boys and girls from sixteen to twenty years old would go six or eight miles on an ox sled to a party, and have a better evening's entertainment than could be had by a New York, London or Paris society party at \$20 a plate. It was an ox sled and possibly two of them chained together, and straw thrown in; it was two or more feet deep, and every girl and every boy brought a blanket to protect them from the cold, and though the oxen moved slowly the party began as soon as the sled was full, and song and story and laughter made those old woods ring, and they ring yet as they echo back to-day the song and shout and laughter of those who have long since crossed the last river, I hope to mingle in eternal day. These parties were not pretentious. There was no latest fad in the gowns the girls wore; there was not a tailor-made suit in the crowd. Some of those gowns were spun and woven at home in the log cabin, and made by "mother's own hands." They were shapely, simple and beautiful, and they covered the forms of bright, beautiful girls, full of spirit and life. The boys were of like pattern, strong, courageous and manly, not a mean streak in them, ready to work or play or fight as the occasion demanded. These were the boys and girls who have since made Michigan what she is to-day. These boys and girls, or their like all over the State, were the fathers and mothers of the men who, from 1861 to 1865, said to the dark proud wave of slave civilization, "so far but no further," and they, with comrades from the other liberty loving States, put a million of human bodies with bayonets in their hands as the breastwork that that proud wave of death and dishonor never surmounted. These boys and girls, their children and children's children, produced the civilization and made the happy homes of this day in Michigan. The suppers that those boys and girls sat down to had no half-dozen different colored wine glasses at their plates. Oh, no! it was a plain, honest meal, produced by loving hands and eaten by innocent and happy humans, and when the supper was over the real fun began. Every flat iron or smooth flat stone that had been provided beforehand, and a hammer for each boy, was brought out, and every boy and girl separated in pairs, close in touch and reach with the other pair near them, and baskets of black walnuts, butternuts, hickory nuts and hazel nuts were brought out, and the boy cracked the nuts and gave them to his partner girl; she picked out the meats and put them in a saucer, and together they ate and divided with their neighbors, and it was wonderful how much they could eat! And then the apples and cider that had been kept sweet until then. But alas! how short these evenings were. We began to gather those loads about five o'clock p. m., and here it was nearly twelve o'clock, and there was a hustle and rush, and the patient, slow but sure going ox team was homeward bound, and

the old song or new story, and shout and laughter lasted until we were all home. Next morning found the boys down in the woods with ax in hand, chopping to clear the land for next fall's wheat sowing.

Now, after this rambling prelude, let me say that in 1844, having rejected a very tempting offer of a place and an interest in a dry goods house to be established in Chicago. or what was then the place where Chicago now is, I accepted an appointment in the old Michigan conference of the Methodist Episcopal church with the privilege of traveling on horseback about three hundred miles, and preaching twenty-eight times every four weeks on an expected salary of \$100 a year. The \$100, however, did not materialize, only about \$38. It was very seldom that I could sleep two nights consecutively in the same bed, but my wants were all supplied; I lived with the people and was one of them. My first appointment from the old Michigan conference, in 1844, was Shiawassee circuit—Rev. R. C. Crawford, preacher in charge; F. A. Blades, junior preacher; J. W. Donaldson, supply—a six weeks' circuit and three preachers, and if I remember, twenty-eight appointments and very nearly three hundred miles on horseback to get around to the several appointments with the necessary travel to get to our stopping places for the night. Wolverton's school house, within three miles of Fentonville, was the most easterly appointment; thence via Byron, Vernon, Shiawassee town, Corunna, Owosso, Dewey's, Bennington, Pitt's, Morrice, Perry, Shaft's, Fuller's in Ingham county; thence into Livingston via Rogers' school-house, Ramsdell's, Boutwell's and all the country within the circle.

This is from memory of fifty years ago, but it seems to me I could go over the road to-day if the old woods and blazed trees were as I left them. The people were poor, but their hospitality was unbounded. Although suffering all the privations incident to pioneer life, and living in cabins, on coarse fare, and sometimes short even at that, the pioneer minister was always welcome. Nor was this hospitality confined to the members of the church, but every house was open to him. In the fifty years now passed since I first went to old Shiawassee I have met courtly people in all the great cities of this country. and enjoyed the hospitality of many, but none of them while sitting at luxurious boards could out-do the old Shiawassee pioneers in cordiality and warm-hearted, home-making hospitality. My colleagues, Rev. R. C. Crawford and Rev. J. W. Donaldson, were most genial, courtly, Christian gentlemen and my year of hard work passed pleasantly. I could fill a whole paper with incidents, but will only mention one as illustrating some of the early experiences in pioneer work.

One day, I think some time in March, 1845, I was in a store in Corunna, and my attention was called to, and I was introduced to, a stranger and a new-comer in "these parts." On inquiry I learned that early in the fall before some five or six families had gone into the wilderness and had been busy all the fall and winter in chopping the timber and preparing to burn

the brush and timber preparatory to their spring crop. He urged me to visit them, and for direction I was told to follow the road as far as it was cut north from Corunna, and then find a certain oak tree marked on four sides, and then follow marked trees north, when I would come to a large beech tree, also marked on four sides. there turn to the left and follow a line of marked trees about two miles, when I would find an ironwood tree and certain witness trees near by, when I was again to turn north and keep on that line until I came to the settlement. I made an appointment to visit them, I think, the last Tuesday in April or the first Tuesday in May. The day appointed came around and about daylight I left my friend Kimberley's house and after, I think now, about three or four miles, I came to the end of the road as it was partly cleared out, and on looking carefully around found the oak tree, got my bearings and plunged into the woods, found all my tree marks, and about noon arrived at the settlement of five or six log shanties, as I remember them. I was most heartily welcomed, and arrangements had been made for worship, and some other parties from other settlements of four or five miles from them had come in. The people came together and I preached to them as well as I could and then had a class meeting. I remember the testimony of one woman who had walked four miles, carrying a child about two years old, to attend the meeting, who said she had come because she wanted once more to worship with somebody as she had not heard a sermon or a prayer in over three years. We sang, preached and prayed and had what I thought then and think now a "good time." But after meeting came the embarrassment. Two of the men of the settlement had gone to Saginaw for some flour and tea and were two days past due, and there was not a loaf of bread or a pound of flour in the settlement, but there was plenty of maple sugar, a few potatoes and plenty fresh fish from the river, and I was just as happy as I have since been when dining at Delmonico's, New York. It was getting late and two young men piloted me out of the woods. I noticed that each one had a large bundle of hickory bark on his back, and as we went on they would lay down a little pile by a tree, and then another, and so on until, when we got to the road I had left in the morning, the bundles of bark were nearly all gone. I stayed with the boys until with flint and steel and a little dry punk they had kindled their fire, lighted their torches and started back into the woods, to replenish their torches from the piles of bark left on their way. I bade them good-bye, they going to the dense forest seeking their homes. I turned my face toward Corunna, and late at night found myself at my friend Kimberley's, and after a little refreshment found my room for the night. This was a day's work I have never forgotten, nor do I know that I have ever seen one of that settlement since.

In the fall of 1846 my appointment was to Lyons Circuit, including Lyons, Ionia and Portland, and about as far east as Wacousta in Clinton

county, and over in Ingham just below Lansing, and an appointment or two in Eaton county.

In the winter of 1847 the legislature in Detroit resolved to change the location of the capital of the State of Michigan. The constitution adopted in 1835 fixed the seat of government at Detroit; it also provided that the legislature of 1847 should determine where the permanent capital should be located. Hence the preparation for the fight of 1847 over the place.

I see that Senator Scripps has been giving the public recently some interesting facts about the locating of the capital at and naming it Lansing; he deals with the records. In what I have to say I deal with the unrecorded legends of the times.

It was currently reported, and believed by many at that time, that the upheaving force to lift the capital from Detroit was a real estate deal in which a great many persons were involved, and it was believed by some that Detroit parties were largely interested. It was claimed by some that men having large land interests near Corunna were responsible for the move to get the capital from Detroit, and they thought they had the strength to locate it at Corunna, but there were other parties who kept very quiet as to where it should go, but were nevertheless active in the effort for its removal. The question once up, the struggle for its location became intense, and while nearly every village and town in central Michigan offered desirable places for it, the real struggle all the time in the deep water beneath the surface was between Corunna and what is now known as Lansing. The Corunna side claimed that the fight at first was between them and the Seymours (two brothers, one of whom was afterwards Governor of New York), who owned land adjoining the school section where the capitol now is, and some parties who were represented by Messrs. Bush, Thomas and Geo. Peck, who in those days were prominent men in Michigan. When these rival interests became reconciled on the plan of placing the capitol on the school section between them, they then became too strong for the Corunna crowd. and they were able to play the school interest for help, and hence it was located where it now is. The stories told of the masterful plays and manipulations of this fight were interesting and sometimes comical. I am only giving you the legends of the times immediately succeeding the events themselves, as they were told me by parties who were interested in the Corunna crowd and saw things from their standpoint. It was finally decided that the capitol should be built on this section of school land in the corner of Ingham county. News in those days did not travel as fast as it does now, but it got around that the capitol of the State was to be located in the wilderness, somewhere in Ingham county, so in the early days of April, 1847, when I went up to the eastern part of my circuit, I thought that I would go and see if I could find the ground that had been selected. I came up to a place that was afterwards known as "the lower town" of Lansing, but at that time known as



Page's saw mill. It was a saw mill on the property that belonged to the Seymours. I stopped there, near to the supposed location of the capitol, and went in and found an old gentleman by the name of Page, and a very pleasant family. I told him what my mission was, and he gave me certain directions following certain lines of marked trees by which I might find myself upon the school section indicated as the ground selected. At that time most of us were as ready to follow our way through the woods by the old marked trees and witness trees for the section corner or quarter section corner as we are now by the roads. After following the direction given by the old gentleman, I reached a spot that was clearly in my mind within the lines that were designated as the place upon which the capitol would be located. It was on a beautiful knoll in a dense wilderness. The outlook was grand and lovely beyond description; I never saw such a piece of timber before or since. I sat down on a log and was taking in the scenery, and remember well the thought that passed through my mind: "It is too bad to destroy such scenery as this; too bad to build a babbling town and break this silence and mar this scene so beautiful and so grand." While sitting there I heard a noise; it sounded as though it might be a bear or a deer, but a deer hardly made such a noise as that. I waited, and in a few minutes a man emerged from the shadow of the trees into the light; as I remember him he was about six feet high and well proportioned. He saw me nearly as quickly as I saw him, and he was the first to break the silence by saying, "I think this is probably a mutual surprise; it is on my part;" and I assured him that it was none the less so on mine. He asked me who I was, and I told him I was a Methodist minister looking for a congregation. "Well," he said, "it is a mighty poor show for a congregation." I asked whom I had the honor of meeting in this wild place. He said, "My name is Glen; I am one of the Commissioners looking for a place to locate the State Capitol." I said to him: "Mr. Glen, do you take in this scene? Look how grand and how stately are those trees, and how they sway their branches to the wind. Look upon this scene, how beautiful it is; it is too bad to bring a babbling town into this sacred place." He looked at me and said: "Mr. Blades, I want to make a bargain with you. If you will help me find a place to locate the capitol, I will try to help you find a congregation." I accepted his proposition. We proceeded to locate the capitol on that beautiful spot by driving into the ground a stake cut with my pocket knife, and marking some small trees to identify the spot, and I learned afterwards that the place we agreed upon was the identical spot selected where the capitol should stand, and where it now stands, both the temporary and permanent buildings. The Commissioners met the next day and after a careful examination of the grounds located the place for the capitol.

Mr. Glen expressed a wish that we could get something to eat, and I

told him that I left my horse down at the saw-mill, and he remarked that where there is a saw-mill there is always men, and usually there was something to eat. Following the lines back he went down with me, and we got there just before the horn blew for dinner. I introduced him to Mr. Page, and he was very cordially received. I remember we had pork and beans for dinner, and what else we had I don't know, but the "cheek" of Mr. Glen disclosed itself just as the dinner was over. He related to Mr. Page the incident of our meeting in the wilderness, and his proposition to "help me find a congregation;" he said we had already found what we thought to be a good place for the capitol, and he thought right here was a good place for a congregation, "and (addressing Mr. Page), with your approval, I move that Mr. Blades give us a sermon right here and now." The motion was carried unanimously, and as it was always a motto of my life to obey orders when it is possible, I arose, gave out a hymn, which was sung from memory, and after a short prayer, I proceeded to speak and preach to them the best I knew how for about twenty minutes, and this, so far as I know, was the first sermon preached in Lansing. Subsequently I was there in May. I had been invited to preach there Sunday morning, and a place had been selected over in the woods under a big beech tree in the vicinity of the place where the capitol now stands. The ground chosen was soon cleared, the woods disappeared as if by magic, and it was not long before streets were being laid out and buildings began to rise preparatory to the convening of the first legislature to meet in Lansing for the session of 1848. My father, William Blades, was the first Whig member ever elected from Genesee county to a seat in the State legislature, and he was a member of that session.

I took Lansing in as a regular appointment on my circuit and visited it periodically. I had some privileges in and about the houses that entire strangers could not have. At this time my intimate personal friend, William M. Fenton, was lieutenant governor, and Hon. Edwin H. Thompson of Flint was a senator; my relation with these gentlemen was as intimate and confidential as it was possible for men to be. To illustrate, I will tell a little story on Lieutenant Governor Fenton. My father was for a number of years justice of the peace in Grand Blanc, Genesee county, and had business with nearly every town in the county. Fenton came over from Fentonville to try the first case he ever had in court, which he lost. My father had an office built in his yard, and I persuaded him to let me have a bed in one corner. The day on which Fenton tried his case was rainy and cold, and I said to Fenton, "Bill, don't go home in the rain; you had better stay and sleep with me, and go home in the morning." He finally consented to do so. We went to bed, and after I had gone to sleep I was suddenly awakened, and was surprised to see Fenton standing in the middle of the floor, cussing himself. I said, "What is the matter?" He said, "I am a fool; I forgot to call on the principal witness,

and so lost the case." "Well," I said, "come back to bed and don't make a fool of yourself the second time the same day."

I was in Lansing one day and went up to the Senate Chamber, and the first man I met was Senator Thompson, and he said to me: "Frank, Bill and I have put up a job on you; we are going to pass a resolution requesting you to preach before the State officers and Senate." The resolution was passed. I lay awake nights to prepare a sermon suitable for the occasion, but when the time came I sat there and looked down on that crowd of distinguished men—Governor Ransom and other men that I knew, and some who were strangers to me—and I laid my prepared sermon aside and turned to a passage in Romans, the first chapter and the sixteenth verse: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation; to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek," and for my sermon I said what was in my heart and what I fully believed, without thought of oratory, or what anybody might say or think of me or my sermon. For the first time since my determination to be a minister, after preaching this sermon, I had the approval of Hon. E. H. Thompson. He felt that I ought to practice law, as I had read law under his direction for some time, and only after this sermon did he say to me, "Frank, it is all right; go ahead and do the best you can."

The legislature of 1848 was not a phenomenal but rather a typical one. From the amount of plank-road charters granted it might have been called the "plank-road legislature." And that we may have a little clue from the past to look and see if we can find anything that has a parallel in our present civilization and experiences with legislatures, I will call your attention to one thing that transpired during that session. I think the charter for some railway, I do not now remember the title, provided that the principal offices and shops should be either in the State of Michigan or in the city of Adrian, and whether there was any other question involved I do not remember, but I think there was something about moneys past due from the railroad. Whatever legislation was sought to be secured was being engineered under the direction of the people who then had charge of what came to be known as the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern railroad. There was a great deal of opposition to the legislation pending, and there was some very hard work being done in favor of it. It was then that I saw for the first time a gold pen, and they were very prominent on the desks of some of the members of both House and Senate. It so happened that my father, William Blades, was one of the members who was decidedly and bitterly opposed to the measure, whatever it was, and after he had made as good a speech as he knew how to against the measure, a prominent member of the bar from Southern Michigan arose to answer him, and after a very lengthy argument in which he severely called down the gentleman from Genesee for his opposition, he

turned to the speaker, and in a very vehement manner said: "Mr. Speaker, I want something, this legislature wants something from the gentleman from Genesee beside rhetoric; I want facts, I want some tangible evidence in support of his position, and reason for his opposition to this measure." It was at this moment that the gentleman from Genesee arose in his place and said: "Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman permit me to interrupt him just for a moment? He demands some facts, some tangible evidence. Permit me to say in reply, sir, that there is no gold pen on my desk." And in less than one minute there was not a gold pen to be seen on any desk in either the upper or lower house, nor could you find anybody who had seen one! My recollection is that the measure did not prevail. In this I may be mistaken, as this was fifty-five years ago. Of course no such thing could possibly happen in a legislature in Michigan in this year of grace 1903.

I remember well some incidents of the last night of that legislature. The House was waiting to hear from the Senate and time was hanging heavily on their hands. A little incident of the evening may amuse you for a moment. I think it is quite common at the close of a legislature for the members to look about for some boxes in which to pack certain perquisites, the "aftermath" of the supplies for the session, in stationery, books, etc. Lansing was new and but few stores in the place. Empty boxes of the proper size were scarce, and one of the members, rather tardy, had to take what he could get, and this was three or four times as large as any of the rest, but even this was not large enough to pack a chair. It attracted attention, and finally a gentleman arose and made a motion that a certain, suspicious looking box then on the floor of the House be examined by a special committee appointed by the chair, which should make a prompt report to this House. The motion was carried, the gentleman making the motion was named chairman, and others selected to complete the committee. They sent for a hammer and opened the box, and scattered the contents about the floor, greatly exasperated the owner, who sat by in rage and disgust, but said nothing. In the box were found some soiled linen, some books and stationery, and a long piece of nice cord that had come around some packages during the winter, which he had saved for a cord for his boy's sled. When the committee had finished the examination, they made a report, recited the contents of the box and facetiously called attention to the cord and begged to be excused from further acquaintance with said cord. This was the opening for the owner of the box, who arose and protested against granting the request of the committee to be excused from further acquaintance with the said cord, claiming that the only proper use for it was to hang the chairman of that committee. And then such a discussion for over an hour! They fired off their oratory and raised their points of order and constitutional questions while they waited to hear from the Senate as to final



adjournment. The owner of that box got even with his persecutors before it was over.

In the Senate Hon. N. G. Isabel of Livingston county was the only Whig member of that body. If my memory serves me, the legislature met Monday, January third, and on Saturday, New Year's day, there was a preliminary meeting of some kind of the members of the Senate who were in town to arrange for the organization of the Senate on Monday. As the story goes, Senator Balch gave notice that the Democratic members of the Senate would meet to select officers for that body, and expressed a hope that every Democratic member of the Senate would be present. As he sat down, Senator N. G. Isabel arose, and in a very grave and dignified manner, gave notice that the Whig members of the Senate would meet in his room at the hotel to caucus on the officers for the Senate and hoped every member would be present. As he sat down it dawned on the dazed majority that Isabel was the only Whig member of the Senate, and they saw his joke; they gathered around him, shook him by the hand, and from that hour he had a warm friend in every other member. On such little things often hangs the success or failure of public men.





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